

HISTORY 1810E
Wars That Changed the World
Fall/Winter 2025-26
Mondays & Wednesdays, 2:30PM to 3:20PM – location TBA

Instructor: Professor Jonathan F. Vance
Office Hours: Mondays, 1 – 2PM, Wednesdays noon – 2PM
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This is a **draft** outline. Please see the course site on OWL Brightspace for a final version.

Course Description:

This course examines in detail a number of transformational wars in history – the Hundred Years Wars, the First World War, the Second World War, and some lesser known conflicts – both in lectures and in tutorials that will also focus on the development of analytical and communication skills. Topics include the implications of war for civilians, politics, economies, popular culture, and technology.

Learning Outcomes:

Through the lectures and assignments, students will gain:
Basic primary source skills: what are primary sources?
Basic secondary source skills: what are secondary sources?
Familiarity with printed and electronic resources
A full understanding of plagiarism and its problems
Basic essay-writing skills: organization, citation, and referencing
A sense of how to spot a really well-made sandwich
Communication skills through presentations and small-group discussion
An appreciation of the fundamental role of war in shaping history and society

Course Materials:

Students must purchase the following textbooks (available in the university bookstore - <https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search>), for use in tutorial discussions and assignments:

Michael Howard, *The First World War: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2002)
Gerhard L. Weinberg, *World War II: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2014)
Other reading materials will be available on the course website.

Methods of Evaluation:

Joan of Arc's playlist (due week of 6 October 2025)	15%
Postcard analysis (due week of 1 December 2025)	20%
Essay outline (due week of 9 February 2026)	10%
Research paper (due week of 23 March 2026)	15%
Final examination (April 2026 exam period)	30%
Participation	10%

Joan of Arc's playlist:

You will create an autobiography of Joan of Arc that takes the form of a playlist. First, divide Joan's life and impact into five themes, subjects, or time periods. After doing research in secondary sources on Joan's life and impact, you will create a playlist of five songs that reveal the key themes, subjects, or time periods that you have chosen. You are **not** looking for songs about Joan of Arc; you are looking for songs from any time period or artist whose titles (**not** the lyrics) express the important points of her life. You may only select **one** song from any one decade or by any one artist. Your assignment will consist of the titles, artists, and dates of the five songs you have chosen. For each song, provide a statement (of roughly 100 words) to explain why the title might have appealed to Joan. Each statement should be accompanied by the appropriate citations. You must also attach a bibliography of the sources you consulted.

****Due week of 6 October 2025****

Postcard analysis:

You will be given an original postcard from the First World War to research and analyze. You should approach it as an exercise in historical detection – how much can the postcard tell you about the time, and about the people and events to which it refers? Because of the nature of the assignment, it does not need a thesis statement, like a conventional research paper. It should include citations and a bibliography. A sample analysis will be made available on the course website.

****Due week of 1 December 2025****

Essay outline:

You will write a research paper on a topic relating to any of the three major wars covered in the course – the Hundred Years War, the First World War, the Second World War, or the smaller wars that have been addressed. The assignment will allow you to bring together skills in interpreting primary and secondary sources, and in bibliographical research. The first step is to create an essay outline consisting of a number of research questions, a list of representative primary and secondary sources, and a 500-word discussion of what you plan to investigate in your essay.

****Due week of 9 February 2026****

Research paper:

The final paper should be roughly 6 to 8 pages in length, not including the title page and bibliography. It should be properly referenced with footnotes or endnotes. In grading, a premium will be placed on your ability to present your argument in an organized fashion and in graceful prose.

****Due week of 23 March 2026****

Note:

You may not make any use of generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, in History 1810. Any use of such tools for assignments in this course may be considered a form of academic misconduct.

Final examination:

The examination will cover the entire year's work, and will consist of both short-answer and long-answer (essay) questions. Further information (including sample questions) will be provided in the winter term.

Make-up tests, midterms, and exams can only be approved by Academic Advising. Please see https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for department procedures and requirements involving make-up tests and exams.

Participation:

Your success in the course depends on a willingness to keep up with the lectures and readings on a weekly basis and to take part fully in tutorial discussion. Your TA will assess your participation (and note that you are assessed on participation, **not** attendance) on an ongoing basis throughout the year, and can provide interim grades upon request. Attendance at tutorials is mandatory. If you cannot attend your own tutorial in any given week, you should consult the tutorial schedule on the course website and arrange with the course director to attend a different tutorial for that week.

Submitting assignments:

All written assignments have **flexible deadlines**, meaning that they may be submitted on any day of the week in which they are due. For this reason, assignments in History 1810 are **NOT** eligible for a request for academic consideration without supporting documentation. Late assignments (ie. those submitted after the Friday of the week in which the assignment is due) will be subject to a deduction of two marks per day, including weekend days, and those submitted more than seven days after the due date will not be graded. No assignments will be accepted after the last day of classes, 9 April 2026. Permission to submit a late assignment **without penalty** can only be given by the Academic Advising office of your home faculty.

All assignments **must** be submitted electronically to the Turnitin plagiarism detection service. Instructions for the submission process through the Brightspace course website will be provided in class. Students are strongly advised not to wait until the last few minutes before midnight to submit an assignment. High demand and internet failure are not acceptable reasons for failing to submit on time. In the event of any problems, contact your instructor.

Note: 'All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).' [www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/exam/crsout.pdf]

History 1810E is designated as an essay course. In order to obtain a passing grade in the course, each student must exhibit a minimum level of competence in essay writing. In practical terms, this means that each student, to pass the course, must achieve a passing grade in the written work (ie. out of the combined written work grade of 60%, you must achieve at least 30%).

All course material will be posted to OWL Brightspace: <https://westernu.brightspace.com/>. If you need assistance with OWL Brightspace, you can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#) page. Alternatively, you can contact the [Western Technology Services Helpdesk](#) online or by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800 for technical support. Current versions of all popular browsers (ie., Safari, Chrome, Edge, Firefox) are supported with OWL Brightspace; what is most important is that you update your browser frequently to ensure it is current. All JavaScript and cookies should be enabled.

Students should communicate with the course director and TAs using their UWO email addresses; all communications regarding the course will be sent to those email addresses, rather than to other accounts (Hotmail, Gmail, etc). Students should also regularly check the Announcements section on the course website for updates.

Course Schedule and Readings

NB - * Tutorials begin the week of 8 September *****

8 and 10 September – Introduction: War – What is it Good For? / War – It's Noisy, It's Boring, and It Smells

Tutorials – Introduction – What is History?

15 and 17 September: War in Gaming / War in Music

Tutorials – How to Read

The Hundred Years War

22 and 24 September: The Hundred Years War for Dummies

Tutorials – Old vs New History

'The Battle of Agincourt,' from *The Chronicles of Enguerrand de Monstrelet* (ca. 1440)

Jan Honig, 'Reappraising Late Medieval Strategy: The Example of the 1415 Agincourt Campaign,' *War in History* 19/2 (2012): 123-51

29 September and 1 October: Revolutions in Military Affairs

Tutorials – Citations and Bibliographies

Yuval Harari, 'Inter-frontal Cooperation in the Fourteenth Century and Edward III's 1346 Campaign,' *War in History* 6/4 (1999): 379-95

6 and 8 October: Joan of Arc or Jeanne d'Arc? / Robin Hood and the Peasants' Revenge: Legacies of the Hundred Years War

Tutorials – History vs Myth

'Joan of Arc' in Willis J. Abbot, *Notable Women of History: The Lives of Women who in All Ages, All Lands and in all Womanly Occupations have Won Fame and Put their Imprint on the World's History* (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Co., 1912)

Yvonne Lanhers and Malcolm G.A. Vale, 'Saint John of Arc', *Britannia Academic* (2019)

****Joan of Arc's playlist assignment due this week****

15 October: Wars of Empire – Pre-Columbian America

Tutorials – Starting your postcard analysis

20 and 22 October: Wars of Empire – Africa

Tutorials – Doing more on your postcard analysis

27 and 29 October: Random Wars That You've Never Heard Of

3 and 5 November: Fall Reading Week – no lecture or tutorials

The First World War

10 and 12 November: Nationalism, Imperialism, & Jingoism / Arms Races and Alliances

Background reading: Howard, *The First World War*, chap. 1 and 2

Tutorials – Primary vs secondary sources

Thomas H. Russell, *The World's Greatest War* (1914), chap. 1

17 and 19 November: The Generation of 1914 in Village and City

Tutorials – Rural vs Urban Life

Jonathan F. Vance, *A Township at War* (2018): 37-47

24 and 26 November: The War at the Front / Filling the Ranks

Background reading: Howard, *The First World War*, chap. 3, 4 and 5

Tutorials – Formulating research questions and organizing a research essay

1 and 3 December: Westerners / Easterners

Background reading: Howard, *The First World War*, chap. 6, 7, and 8

****Postcard analysis due this week****

8 December: Mobilizing Consent / Technology

Tutorials – Cartoons in War

Jane Chapman and Dan Ellin, 'Dominion Cartoon Satire as Trench Culture Narratives: Complaints, Endurance and Stoicism,' *The Round Table* 103/2 (2014): 175-92

5 and 7 January: Intervention and Revolution / 1918

Background reading: Howard, *The First World War*, chap. 6, 7, and 8

Tutorials – Operational History

Report on the Operations of 31st Battalion in the Neighbourhood of St Eloi, 3-9 April 1916

War Diary, 31st Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force, April 1916

Account by Lieut.-Col. A.H. Bell, 31st Battalion

Tim Cook, 'The Blind Leading the Blind: The Battle of the St Eloi Craters,' *Canadian Military History* 5/2 (1996): 24-36

12 and 14 January: Lands Fit for Heroes / Remembering War

Background reading: Howard, *The First World War*, chap. 9

Tutorials – Commemoration

Jonathan F. Vance, 'Remembering Armageddon,' in David MacKenzie, ed., *Canada and the First World War: Essays in Honour of Robert Craig Brown* (2005): 409-33

19 and 21 January: More Random Wars That You've Never Heard Of

Tutorials – History On-line

26 and 28 January: Virtual Wars on Television and at the Movies

Tutorials – War on Film

John Whiteclay Chambers, 'The Movies and the Antiwar Debate in America, 1930-1941,' *Film & History* 36/1 (2006)

2 and 4 February: Fan Vote Wars

The Second World War

9 and 11 February: The Road to the Pacific War / The Nazis and Versailles

Background reading: Weinberg, *World War II*, chap. 1

****Essay outline due this week****

16 and 18 February – Reading Week – no lectures or tutorials

23 and 25 February: War / Occupation

Background reading: Weinberg, *World War II*, chap. 2 and 3

2 and 4 March: Barbarossa / Divine Wind

Background reading: Weinberg, *World War II*, chap. 4 and 5

Tutorials – Newspapers at War

James T. O'Donnell, 'Content, Comment and Censorship: A Case Study Comparing Coverage of Dunkirk and D-Day in Irish Newspapers,' *Media History* 23/3-4 (2017): 345-59

9 and 11 March: Mobilizing Consent / Secret Wars

Tutorials – Music in Wartime

Kathleen E.R. Smith, *God Bless America: Tin Pan Alley Goes to War* (2003): chap. 10

16 and 18 March: War on Civilians: Bombing and Genocide

Background reading: Weinberg, *World War II*, chap. 7

Tutorials – High School in Wartime

Christine Hamelin, 'A Sense of Purpose: Ottawa Students and the Second World War,' *Canadian Military History* 6/1 (1997): 34-41

23 and 25 March: Midway to Island-Hopping / Sicily to Overlord

Tutorials – Writing Home from the Front

Katherine I. Miller, 'My Father and His Father: An Analysis of World War II Correspondence,' *Journal of Family Communication* 8 (2008): 148-65

****Research essay due this week****

30 March and 1 April: VE and VJ Day / Conclusion: Remembering War

Background reading: Weinberg, *World War II*, chap. 6 and 8

6 and 8 April: The Future of War / Conclusion: Do Wars Change the World?

Use of Electronic Devices:

We recognize that, for academic purposes, students rely heavily on electronic devices such as laptops or smartphones, and may be accustomed to using them in class for taking notes or following the readings. Our assumption is that students will be respectful of their instructors and fellow students in using electronic devices, and will not engage in activities that distract those around them. In the event of disruptive use of such devices, the course director reserves the right to request that any device be turned off or put away; in extreme situations, a student may be asked to leave the classroom.

Please review the Department of History's shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at: https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.